

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed January 30, 2007, claims 12, 20 and 221 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph; claims 1-4, 18 and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ramsauer (U.S. Patent No. 6,550,824); claim 1-11, 13-19, 22-24 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ostdiek et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,036,241); and claims 12, 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ostdiek et al. in view of Ramsauer and further in view of Onderka et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,145,898). The foregoing rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 1, 5 and 25 have been amended to further clarify the patentable distinction of the present invention. Support for the claim amendments can be found at FIG. 2 and paragraphs [0029] – [0032] of the specification. No new matter has been introduced.

Claims 1-27 are currently pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Regarding the 112 rejection of claims 12, 20 and 21:

At page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that the “connecting part” as recited in claims 12, 20 and 21 is vague and indefinite. However, the Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner. As recited in claim 12, for example “the connecting part...**connects the first coil part to the second coil part**, the connecting part disposed on the third lever part of the latch to be rotated by a rotation of the third lever part, **the first and second coil parts being compressed or restored to original states thereof by a rotation of the connecting part**, providing an elastic force to the latch”. Therefore, withdrawal of the 112 rejection of claims 12, 20 and 21 is respectfully requested.

Regarding the 102(b) rejections:

As the Examiner admits on page 2 of the Office Action, Ramsauer is unrelated to “a washing machine” as recited in claim 1, for example.

In contrast, Ramsauer discusses a snap lock device for **a sliding door** of a machine casing, the sliding door is reinforced on at least one side by a sheet metal fold or a hollow rectangular profile, with a handle 20 which is swivelably mounted at the reinforced side of the sliding door and cooperates with a latch bolt device 24 (see abstract and FIG. 1, for example).

Therefore, claims 1-4, 18 and 25-27 patentably distinguish over Ramsauer. Thus, withdrawal of the 102(b) rejection is respectfully requested.

Regarding the 103(a) rejections:

None of the foregoing references relied upon, discuss or teach **“a washing machine, comprising: a cabinet having an opening at a first portion of the cabinet; a door which opens and closes the opening of the cabinet and comprising a transparent part and a frame including an opening; and a door-locking unit provided between the transparent part and the frame of the door,** which locks and unlocks the door to and from the cabinet, the door-locking unit including: a handle hinged to a first hinge unit which is provided on a first position of the door, a latch hinged to a second hinge unit which is provided on a second position of the door, the latch being rotated by an operation of the handle to lock and unlock the door to and from the cabinet, **the first and second hinge units are provided on an inner surface of frame to be spaced apart from each other by an interval, such that a user manipulates the handle through the opening of the frame and the handle and the latch are rotatably mounted to the first and second hinge units, respectively,** and an elastic unit on the second hinge unit which elastically biases the latch in a direction where the latch is locked to the cabinet”. Claim 25 has been amended to recite features somewhat similar to those recited in amended claim 1.

Ramsauer is unrelated to “a washing machine” as recited in the present invention. Instead, Ramsauer discusses “a snap lock device for a sliding door” as discussed above.

Further, neither Ostdiek et al. nor Onderka et al., individually or combined, make up for the deficiencies of Ramsauer.

In contrast, Ostdiek et al. merely discusses a locking mechanism for an appliance door which includes a spring biased catch member attached to the door and a latching housing insert fixed to a cabinet shell of the appliance (see FIGS. 1 and 2, for example). The locking mechanism of Ostdiek et al. includes a catch member which projects from an inside surface of the door and is received in a latching cavity 46 formed as a latching insert housing 48 that is secured to a cabinet shell of the washing machine. The locking mechanism of Ostdiek et al. is not provided between a transparent part and a frame of the door “such that a user manipulates the handle through the opening of the frame” as recited in amended claim 1, for example.

In addition, Onderka et al. merely discusses a door locking device for an electric apparatus, for example a household appliance which includes a lock having a locking slide, supported in the lock and movable back and forth between an opening position and a closing position, having a blocking device for arresting the locking slide in its closing position (see FIGS. 1, 5 and 11, for example).

Dependent claims 2-24 and 26-27 depend from claims 1 and 25 respectively. Therefore, the comments mentioned above may also be applied to the rejection of these claims. In

addition, the dependent claims include patentably distinguishing features of their own. For example, claim 12 recites "the elastic unit comprises first and second coil parts, the first coil part between the hub of the latch and the first bracket, and the second coil part between the hub of the latch and the second bracket; and a connecting part which connects the first coil part to the second coil part, the connecting part disposed on the third lever part of the latch to be rotated by a rotation of the third lever part, the first and second coil parts being compressed or restored to original states thereof by a rotation of the connecting part, providing an elastic force to the latch".

Therefore, the combination of the foregoing references fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness over the present invention. To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or discuss all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, and not based on applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991). See M.P.E.P. § 2142.

Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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